



The Oceanvale Programme

The Oceanvale programme has been instituted in the memory of Ravi Singh, a former student of the Department of English at Kirori Mal College, and has been held each semester since autumn 2018. Ravi intended to devote himself to the art and craft of writing, but his early demise meant that *Oceanvale*, published shortly after he graduated, remains his first and last published novel. The bi-annual Oceanvale programme aims to introduce students with exceptional scholarly potential to advanced research, analytical and writing skills by having them work intensively and closely with scholars and authors of eminence in the field.

The Department of English has to date held three full editions of the Oceanvale Workshop. Each such workshop has been a productive collaboration between a team of renowned scholars of the humanities, and committed students of English Literature, both undergraduates and postgraduates, from colleges across Delhi University.

Autumn 2018

THE IDEA OF THE TEXT



The first Oceanvale Workshop was held from held on September 28–30, 2018. It was conducted by Professor Sukanta Chaudhuri (Jadavpur University), Dr Prasanta Chakravarty (University of Delhi), and Dr N.A. Jacob (Ramjas College, University of Delhi).

This workshop sought to throw new light on the text, and how it is shaped in culture and society.

Concept Note

Sukanta Chaudhuri, Jadavpur University

A text is a composition in a language. There are languages other than the verbal systems – Hindi, Bengali, English etc. – that we most often mean by the term. Any means of conveying meaning through a code or a sign-system can be called a language. Any exercise in conveying meaning through any such means is a text. Works of music, dance and visual art (not necessarily symbolic in an explicit way) are texts. So are diagrams and traffic signs. So are communications using mathematical and scientific symbols rather than natural language. A play acted on the stage is a different text from the script of that play. Electronic texts remain texts even though their original language of composition has been ‘translated’ into a structure of zeros and ones. However, natural

languages are the most complex and versatile sign-systems we know of, hence ‘languages’ *par excellence*. This is what I will mean by ‘language’ in what follows.

A language consists of a set of arbitrary sounds (which may be further represented by arbitrary visual signs), which we combine in arbitrary ways to render meaning. The signs are arbitrary because they do not carry any intrinsic meaning: one language can refer to a certain animal as *kutta* and another as *dog* because neither word has any essential link with the animal in question. There is always a gap between a word and what it ‘means’ or signifies: the word *indicates* something without *being* it or even having an organic link with it. The gap expands when the word combines with others in a sentence: how do we interpret the relationship between them? How does that structure of arbitrary signs relate to the structure of the ‘real’ world? How can a whole text composed of such signs tell us anything about that world?

A text is a fiction, something made or manufactured out of the materials of language. By ‘fiction’, I do not mean that a text must necessarily tell a story, though of course many texts do, like novels or epics. A novel narrates imaginary events about imaginary people – but they *resemble* real events and real people, hence novels can tell us something about the ‘real’ world. Other kinds of texts – say, a study of historical events or an account of the solar system – are usually viewed from the opposite end. We assume these texts are about real objects, events and people; but *we can only understand them as the text describes them* – in other words, as they are structured and narrated by the mind imaging or ‘imagining’ the subject. So **the first point to understand about texts** is that they are mental constructs: they represent an idea of something, not that thing itself – just as the words constituting that text represent ideas of things (even ideas of ideas!) rather than the thing itself.

The ideas that follow from this basic principle are easier to grasp. **The second point to understand** is that if a text is born in the human mind, it will change as the mind itself changes, while the world in which the mind is located changes too. Few if any texts spring ready-made in the author’s mind in one go: there is a process of composition, which might last a few minutes or continue over years. Hence **the third point to understand**: a text is not a fixed presence on the page but a dynamic process: the unchanging words on the page are only a sign or pointer to that process.

A work may not be published at all, or even formally composed or written down: it can keep growing for ever in the author’s mind. Or it may be published before it is fully composed: that is to say, the author might keep rethinking and changing the text even after publication. In that case, there will be later versions of the work, which might appear in print as later editions. Hence **the fourth point to understand**: the dynamic textual process is embodied in different material versions of the work. To come to terms with the work, we must look at all these versions – including hypothetical ones that may not have survived or even existed in the first place.

The fifth point to understand is that the author is not solely responsible for the text in front of you, unless it is a manuscript in his own hand. Books are edited, typeset, proof-

read; also censored, abridged, compiled with other books, presented in various formats. Not only printed books but most manuscripts are the result of a process of ‘socialization’ involving other people.

The sixth point to understand is that besides the direct, concrete impact of other hands, a text changes with a change of medium – from orality to script, from manuscript to print, from print to digitality. It changes in a different way when transferred to a different form or language: from a play-text to a stage performance, from a novel to a film or an opera. In these cases, we may say that it becomes a different text in a different ‘language’. What, again, of works ‘born digital’? The electronic text has brought about a profound revolution of cultural history. We are living through it, even while extensively drawing on earlier textual forms, especially the printed book. How are we viewing and negotiating the change?

My **seventh and last point** is that the readerly reception of a text influences the reception and composition of other texts. We react to every book we read in the light of our experience of other books (of which each of us has read a unique combination). We may then proceed to write other texts reflecting our response to that particular text alongside others. Walter Benjamin called this continuing, potentially never-ending process the ‘afterlife’ of a text.

For all these reasons, when we see a text on the page, we cannot take it at face value. We must look at it critically, asking

- how it came into being and developed as a composition;
- how the author’s composition was refashioned and extended by others;
- how, as a ‘sign’ at several levels (the sign-like function of language being the most basic), a text – a construct of arbitrary and empty words – engages with reality;
- how one text generates others, as it was generated by others in the first place;
- what factors might have compromised the text in front of us, and what the true reading should be;
- given the above issues and problems, whether a text can have a single ‘true’ reading at all.

Spring 2019

EXPLORING SUBJECTIVITY

Mind, Body, Action

THE OCEANVALE WORKSHOP

KIRORI MAL COLLEGE
Spring 2019: 13-16 March

Exploring Subjectivity
Mind, Body, Action

Baidik Bhattacharya Udaya Kumar V. Sanil

A maximum of three undergraduate and three postgraduate students from each college shall be selected.

Apply through the teacher-in-charge of your college latest by 15 January 2019 with:

- An abstract
- A writing sample
- One recommendation letter from your teacher

Email: oceanvale.kmc@gmail.com

The workshop includes four days of individually mentored sessions on analysis and writing culminating in presentations. The best essay in BA and MA categories will each be published and awarded a prize of Rs. 10,000.

All programme details are available with your teacher-in-charge.

For more information call:
Rudrashish: 9654122823
Someswar: 9958349702

Website: oceanvaleworkshop.000webhostapp.com

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
KIRORI MAL COLLEGE | UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

The second Oceanvale Workshop was held on 13-16 March 2019, under the supervision of Professor Udaya Kumar (Jawaharlal Nehru University), Professor V. Sanil (IIT Delhi), and Dr. Baidik Bhattacharya (Centre for the Study of Developing Societies).

They worked with student participants on the deployment of subjectivity in literary and other texts.

Concept Note

Baidik Bhattacharya, Udaya Kumar, and V. Sanil

We encounter the words ‘subject’, ‘subjective’ and ‘subjectivity’ frequently in discussions of literature. ‘Subjective,’ is often used for describing an individual’s private experience or opinions as different from ‘objective,’ measurable or verifiable facts. Sometimes the word ‘subject’ is applied to those who perform actions; but the word is equally used for those who experience situations, emotions, or feelings. Many critics consider authors as the ‘subjects’ of literary works; some look at readers as the ‘subjects’

of literary experience; and readers of stories tend to regard characters as subjects. The aim of this workshop is to get a clearer sense of the varied uses of words clustered around the idea of 'subjectivity' and explore what questions we can ask with them, and what new perspectives or approaches they give rise to. To grasp the concept of the subject, it is useful to see how it is related to and different from other concepts in its neighbourhood—such as 'person,' 'self,' and 'agent.'

There is a tendency to regard human subjectivity as mental, belonging to the inner domain of human life. The French philosopher Descartes was probably referring to something of this kind when he said "I think, therefore I am." The inner lives of human beings are not only about thinking in a rational sense. Literature, as all of us know, is known for exploring many dimensions of this, like emotions, feelings, sensations, thoughts, dreams and fantasies. Many of these aspects of subjectivity do not even belong to our conscious life. How do each of these domains of inner life affect our conception of the subject?

The 'Copernican turn' in western enlightenment philosophy shifted the standpoint of 'thinking' to that of the subject. Our knowledge of reality, according to this view, is dependent on our relationship with reality. In other words, the 'I' is an unsubstitutable perspective on the world. However, it is only one among many such perspectives. Still, we discover the laws of nature, enter into morally binding relationship with others, and express ourselves sincerely. How are these possible? Readers and students of literature are familiar with this question. The play of the 'first person' and 'third person' points of view in narratives and the tensions in lyric poetry between a preoccupation with the self and the address to the reader are marks of this.

What is subjectivity? Is it the experiential life that presupposes self consciousness? Can we understand this experience as self reflection and introspection? The irreducible subjective dimension of experience does not preclude the challenges to the notion of a unified self. Modernist writers such as Joyce, Woolf, Kafka and Beckett may be seen as trying to find a form of writing that works with such lack of unity. The embeddedness of the self in "one's own body" and in social practices open up the horizon of intersubjectivity. Who is this Other: someone like me, another self?

Our knowledge of ourselves and others is not exhausted by inference or induction. A clear understanding of this knowledge seems to be necessary for giving an account of a spectrum of emotions ranging from love, empathy, hate to shame and humiliation. Self-understanding does not mean that we are present to ourselves as an object or fact in an immediate manner. The self could be thought of as an accomplishment. The narrative conception of the self provides a normative account of the self as an act. Is the idea of narrative adequate to render the intensity of our encounter with novelty in the world, the radical difference of the other, and the trauma and suffering experienced by the self? These questions enable us to look afresh at literary texts and forms of life writing that bear testimony to traumatic events that render narration impossibly difficult.

The idea of the subject has often been associated with action, as the ‘doer behind the deed.’ Philosophers like Nietzsche have questioned this approach. There are so many different kinds of actions, ranging from those that are consciously intended and planned to inadvertent or accidental ones and to things we do without reflecting, out of habit. Actions are not carried out in an empty world; they take shape in a world where desires, moral values, social norms and conventions, chance events and accidents exert their force. Literature from ancient times to our own—from the Mahabharata and Greek tragedies to science fiction and fantasy narratives—has explored ways in which human beings are implicated in chains of action and what this reveals about human subjectivity.

An area where the subject has been prominently studied in recent years is in relationship to structures of power. Traditionally power is seen as constraining human beings and limiting their freedom. Challenging this view, thinkers like Michel Foucault argued that power relations are everywhere, and that subjects are not outside this field; it would be more useful to see subjects as produced by power. Exploring this link allows us to analyze different forms of subjectivity in relation to history and location. For example, a woman subject in nineteenth century England or a gay subject in twenty-first century America or a Dalit subject in contemporary India may be understood in deep interrelationship with configurations of power that shape gender, sexuality and caste in these places and times. People do not always accept existing power relations and their effects; they also resist domination. Looking at various kinds of resistance is hugely useful and fascinating in the study of subjectivity.

Another way of thinking about subjectivity or the self is to anchor it in its most immediate locale—i.e. the human body. Building on a long tradition of European philosophy on subjectivity and the body—that is premised on the complex relationship between ‘having’ a body and ‘being’ that body—scholars in recent decades have shown how critical readings of the body can lead to a more nuanced understanding of the way subjects or selves are formed. The body is our primary opening to the world of objects, senses, and thoughts—as such, it is the experience of embodiment (being one’s body) that gives us access to our lifeworlds. However, the body itself is not an innocent or unmarked object/self, as it is often defined through various categories like gender/sexuality, class, caste, ethnicity, religion, disability and so on. Or, as in cultural studies and other disciplines, the body is often described as ‘enthralled’ to given power regimes and their specific cultural and social codifications. As a result, though we often stage certain identities on our bodies (think of caste markers, or use of tattoos or piercing, or even cross-dressing), we also need to be conscious of the imperceptible limits of our self-fashioning placed on us by different regimes of power. Literary texts, films, philosophical discourses, and political movements allow us to understand this essential duality of the body—you may think of classic novels like Robinson Crusoe or Frankenstein, or more recent texts like *The Hunger Games* or *Disgrace*; or political movements like Dalit movements, temple entry movements like Sabarimala, or even ‘Pinjra Tod.’ It is useful to explore these ideas around the body and subjectivity in conjunction with questions of power, affect, sexuality, and technology.

Autumn 2019

REPRESENTING DISABILITY IN INDIA

Texts And Contexts

THE OCEANVALE WORKSHOP

AUTUMN 2019; SEPTEMBER 25 - 28
KIRORI MAL COLLEGE

REPRESENTING DISABILITY IN INDIA
TEXTS AND CONTEXTS

Professor Shilpaa Anand
Professor Shubhangi Vaidya

Professor Renu Addlakha
Professor Karuna Rajeev

Open to Undergraduate and Postgraduate students across NCR.

Apply through the teacher-in-charge of your college latest by 18th August 2019 with:

- An abstract (500 words)
- A writing sample
- One recommendation letter from your teacher.

Send to oceanvale.kmc@gmail.com

The workshop includes four days of individually mentored sessions on analysis and writing culminating in presentations. The best essay in each category will be published and awarded a prize of ₹ 10,000.

All programme details are available with your teacher-in-charge.

For more information call:
Dhananjay: 99103-33987
Saloni: 98182-00882

www.oceanvaleworkshop.000webhostapp.com

The third Oceanvale Workshop was conducted on 25–28 September 2019, under the supervision of Professor Shilpaa Anand (BITS Pilani), Professor Renu Addlakha (Centre for Women’s Development and Studies), Professor Shubhangi Vaidya (IGNOU), and Professor Karuna Rajeev (Lady Shri Ram College, University of Delhi).

The invited experts facilitated the study of a range of texts through the lens of disability studies

Concept Note

Shilpaa Anand, Renu Addlakha, Shubhangi Vaidya, and Karuna Rajeev

Stories of bodies and minds make up literature, and more so, stories of abnormal bodies and unstable minds. They are plotted, narrated and characterized variously and often dominate or determine the tension in a text, thereby performing an aesthetic function. One has to only think of all the monsters, freaks and mad women that populate the canon to know this is true. But, why are abnormal figures at the heart of these stories and what

do they tell us about the society that writes and circulates these stories? Can we read them, in turn, as stories that produce, enliven and perpetuate notions of normalcy, sanity and stability? It does appear that disabled characters act as props that uphold ideals of normalcy, sanity and stability. They are constructed in discourse so as to make the idea of the normal more explicit. The norm of so-called normal bodies and minds is constituted through stories of abnormality, disability, debility and instability.

Let us also consider that disease, deformity and dysfunction populate our everyday lives in multiple ways, yet our interaction with people affected by these is at best, minimal or hidden. Think about the hushed tones in which news of a relative's cancer is reported, the furtive glances we share in the presence of a stranger in a wheelchair or how we rarely address a blind person directly. On a daily basis, we experience medical diagnosis, social stigma and cultural labelling on account of corporeal and cognitive differences. And it is through these practices that normalcy, that state which is universally desired, is constructed. Normalcy may be familiar to us as 'health', 'intelligence' and 'able-bodiedness'. While health may be defined as the absence of disease, physical and psychological normalcy is described as the absence of disability and madness. Scholars in the fields of Disability Studies and Medical Humanities have demonstrated that all these different notions of normalcy are produced by and sustained through institutional, socio-political and cultural practices of 'othering'.

The proposed workshop intends to unravel notions of normalcy that are embedded in stories of abnormal bodies. For instance, characters with hunched backs or facial disfigurement in myths, folktales and fairy tales embody certain negative human traits or characteristics. Manthara and Shakuni from Indian mythology serve as useful examples. What insights can an examination of such characters and their employment reveal about the representation of morality?

Similarly, socio-cultural responses to specific forms of debility may inform our understanding of how abnormality is affectively constructed. Consider that stuttering and stammering lend themselves to elevate comic moments in texts and our everyday lives while the loss of limbs more readily frames tragic tropes. We could explore as well the significance of disabled people self-identifying as disabled in different ways and writing about their experiences. How does the representation of an impairment change when it is presented as a first person narrative? In this case, we could consider life-writing by disabled writers, both fiction and non-fiction, for instance, Firdaus Kanga's fictionalized autobiography, *Trying to Grow* and Reshma Valliappan's account of living with schizophrenia, *Fallen Standing: My life as a schizophrenist*. What can we learn about concepts akin to normalcy, health and sanity that are part of Indian cultural worlds? What insights can we draw from theory on disability to explore texts of the Indian context?

The aim of the workshop is to develop ways to think and talk about concepts of corporeal difference that are socio-culturally and socio-historically located away from the Western context. Such explorations of corporeal difference, it is hoped, will enable us to examine the intersections at which gender, caste, religion, sexuality, class and disability operate.

The workshop will explore three routes of inquiry:

1. How do we read concepts historically using literary and cultural texts? For instance, the 19th century English literary canon on its own reflects a shift in representations of monstrosity. Monstrosity, it appears, moves from a strong material presence in texts such as *Frankenstein* to a part-material, part-metaphorical presence in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and moves on to a predominantly metaphorical presence in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Our discussion of representation histories of the abnormal will be informed by Ian Hacking's social histories of disease conditions. In his commentary on the proliferation of Autism life writing, Hacking suggests that the phenomenon of this genre's prevalence may be reflective of the emergence of a vocabulary that describe a lived experience that was previously considered indescribable.

What would a similar study of the Indian context reveal? For instance, the figure of Shah Daula's chuhas (microcephalic youth living in and around Shah Daula's dargah in the Gujarat region) recur in short stories by Flora Annie Steele and Sadat Hasan Manto. A cursory yet close reading of the stories as social commentaries has the potential to reveal that they document the stigma borne by women who were labelled as infertile than about the impairment condition called microcephaly. In doing so they archive evidence of a biological condition that has historically drawn the attention that disability theory describes as disability stigma.

2. How do we study culturally distinct ways of narrating bodyminds? This question draws attention to two significant aspects – one, cultural difference; two, modes of description, narration and expression. The latter invites us to reflect on speech acts and their social meanings as well as metaphors and their rhetorical value. To explore the first, let us take into consideration the work of anthropologists such as Patrick Devlieger and James Staples. Devlieger's ethnographic study of disability in the Songye community in Africa reveals that a society's response to its 'disabled' members tells us something about its conceptualization of disability. For instance, Songye people's response to the presence of disabled children includes descriptions of causality, descriptions that explain the presence of disabled individuals. In contrast, anglocentric communities respond to disabilities by describing them as problems that require solutions. These two responses are also distinct ways of knowing and going-about disability. To take another instance, James Staples, in his study of old city Hyderabad, observes that the rhetoric of disability that people articulate is distinct from their everyday responses/actions towards disabled people.

The use of disability metaphors in everyday speech acts add different kinds of value to disabilities. Disease and disability metaphors have been identified by literary disability studies scholars as working adversely in relation to the social experiences of disabled people because the use of these metaphors carry an evaluative force that reinforces disability as an undesirable experience. David Mitchell, in his essay 'Narrative Prosthesis and the Materiality of Metaphor' makes a case about the dominance of disability as metaphor in language occludes the material aspects of disability. In variation, Tanya Titchkosky, a disability scholar argues that disability metaphors when

used in the context of social justice and advocacy, open up a space for creative meaning-making because their usage is not merely rhetorical in nature. Titchkosky, examines the use of amputation metaphors in Franz Fanon's work *Black Skin, White Masks*. Fanon's use of the amputation metaphor to convey the idea of cutting himself off from himself because he was forced to inhabit a prison-like world by and along with the white man, is an instance of how disability metaphors work creatively. Using these debates on metaphor as a point of departure, we could investigate the work that disability metaphors do within our different cultural worlds.

3. How do we find 'disability' in texts or, what are 'disability texts'? This question ties together three other skeins: one relating to the concepts abnormality and disability, a second one about cultural distinctions that inform epistemic and discursive notions of corporeality and a third about narrating corporeality and corporeal difference. An important objective of the workshop is to not consider disability as a self-evident concept or category but as something that can be critically constituted through a reading of literary and cultural texts (cinema, digital media, journalistic sources, proverbs, idioms). Rather than believing that we will recognize disability in a text as soon as we read it, let us read texts to make perspicuous aspects of culturally different concepts of corporeality. Critically reflecting on texts from different Indian languages and matters concerning translation of words and concepts pertaining to corporeality and corporeal difference may enable us to think about these very ideas in different language-worlds. How do words indicative of corporeal difference mean in different languages? For instance, *nonti* in Tamil, *mazoor* in Urdu, *aviti* in Telugu, *viklang* and *apahich* in Hindi carry different sensibilities and rhetorical value that, when unpacked, may contribute deeper understandings of corporeal difference through a study of literary and cultural texts.

Some of the guiding questions to hold onto during the workshop would be:

- Is disability universally self-evident?
- How are bodily and cognitive differences narrated?
- How do we engage with various frameworks of disabled subjectivity, i.e. pity, charity, stigma, disavowal, affirmation and enablement?
- How do these ways of narrating add to our conceptualization of bodily and cognitive difference?
- How do we read voice in narratives of disability?
- How does one evaluate self and other dynamics when disability is represented by the able-bodied other?

Oceanvale Awards

The Oceanvale programme awards the best essays produced by its participants in each edition with a cash prize; moreover, all essays that display exceptional scholarly abilities are also eventually published both online as well as in print. In the first two editions, the following participants have distinguished themselves with their research:

Autumn 2018

| Name | College | Course | Year | Essay Title |
|------------------|----------------------|--------|----------|---|
| Anagha Gopal | St Stephen's College | MA | 2nd year | Reading Authors/Authors Reading: Navigating Textual Worlds through Rainbow Rowell's <i>Carry On</i> |
| Anshul Mukarji | St Stephen's College | MA | 1st year | Adorno at Ferndean: Some Considerations on Slavery and Aesthetics in <i>Jane Eyre</i> |
| Mehvish Siddiqui | Hindu College | MA | 2nd year | Misplacing Heads, Textual Formation, and Reformation: Somadeva's <i>Kathasaritasagara</i> , Thomas Mann's <i>The Transposed Heads</i> , and Girish Karnad's <i>Hayavadana</i> |
| Karan Kimothi | Ramjas College | BA | 3rd year | The Textual Experience: The Interplay of the Image and the Text in <i>Watchmen</i> |
| Raginee Sarmah | St Stephen's College | BA | 3rd year | Feminist Epistemology and the Web-based Text: Reflections on Raya Sarkar's List |
| Raunak Kumar | Ramjas College | BA | 3rd year | The Postmodern Text: Answer to the Problem of Meaning |

Spring 2019

| Name | College | Course | Year | Essay Title |
|----------------|--------------------------|--------|----------|--|
| Ananta Ahuja | SGTB Khalsa College | MA | 2nd year | Image and Subjectivity in Samuel Beckett's <i>Krapp's Last Tape</i> |
| Nikita Pinto | Jesus and Mary College | MA | 2nd year | 'There's a Special Kind of Monster that is a Woman': Locating Female Subjectivity in Narratives of the Monstrous Murderess in Netflix's <i>Alias Grace</i> |
| Siddhant Datta | Ramjas College | MA | 1st year | Shame and Failure of Recognition in <i>The Hungry Tide</i> |
| Anoushka Sinha | Sri Venkateswara College | BA | 3rd year | Resistance: the Subaltern Subject – A Study of Mahasweta Devi's Fiction |
| Suchandra Bose | Miranda House | BA | 3rd year | Exploring the Anxiety of Action in <i>Call Me by Your Name</i> |

Testimonials

I write this letter with utmost sincerity and profound feeling of gratitude towards the English Department of Kirori Mal College that facilitated for me not just THE BEST learning experience I have had in the last few years in the form of 'Oceanvale Workshop', but also opened its arms so wide that it was enough to make me feel more at "home" in just a week, than I have ever felt in a year at my college. This workshop wasn't just about getting to meet the best scholars of the field or about interacting with them regarding our research, it was also about the shared pieces of naan, the smiles in the corridors, serious discussions over frivolous things, exchanging numbers and building friendships (that last to this day), the joy in our laughter, and the warmth everywhere! I will not dwell on how wonderful and indeed 'necessary' such a workshop is for students like me (because I am sure a lot of people have said this) but how amazing the experience of it has been for me, and I am sure fellow participants will echo similar sentiments. To begin at the beginning – the 'Oceanvale Mixer' made for a great entry point, into the very intellectually stimulating and enriching, week-long workshop that followed it. It introduced me to fellow participants and acquainted me with their researches. I was truly amazed (to say the least) by how different our ideas on the same theme could be. Moreover, I got to meet people who would prove to be great friends later too (A personal story about how many of my 'Oceanvale friends' helped me – even though they were considerably busy with their papers and entrances, etc. – when I was sick the entire June and needed blood transfusions). Then my first workshop session with Saloni ma'am. She did not just 'comment' on the paper but actually 'engaged' with it, as we discussed what could be done to make it better. The peer group was of immense help too. We could discuss the overlaps in our papers and give each other constructive feedback which further improved my paper. Moreover, Saloni ma'am was kind enough to provide unconditional help going as far as to suggest that we see her at KMC or email her our revised papers so that she could give suggestions, once again before the papers went to our mentors. I can't thank her enough for all the help and support. Now, coming to the week-long workshop where I got to meet Professor Sanil and Dr. Baidik Bhattacharya, I'm truly not exaggerating when I say I was stunned after my workshop session with Dr Bhattacharya. While Professor Sanil showed me various ways in which I could approach the topic I was working on, Dr. Bhattacharya deconstructed the entire paper and told me to narrow down my research. I came out from the room with an exhaustive list of books and a head bursting with ideas. Then the peer review session, which saw students actively engage with the paper, evident from the number of questions that were put up. Every single person in the room had something to say for the paper, which further helped me with ideas. Added to this, the food at KMC was the best I have had at any conference/workshop. Kirori Mal College should pat itself on the back for hosting one of the best and most constructive academic workshops that are open to us. The mentors, organisers, faculty, students, fellow participants, photographers, volunteers and all those who were involved ensured that Oceanvale Workshop stands true to its claim and to all, that the first batch of scholars immensely praised it for – not just academic learning but warmth, hospitality and as a place for forging strong bonds as well.

Thank you, truly.

Iqra Khilji, Spring 2019

Thank you for the wonderful experience. This edition of Oceanvale, I feel was even more engaging and eye opening than the previous one. The peer review session genuinely helped and it led to more or less everyone reading all the papers and thus we had several very engaging discussions. As for my paper I received very unique ideas from my peers as well as the mentors which have given me new ways to approach the topic. Moreover, I'm particularly thankful to Oceanvale for the mentors who were invited because not only was it amazing listening to them but they were very active and engaged in the whole revision process which I truly appreciate. I don't know whether I will have the opportunity to be a part of the future Oceanvale editions or not but I sincerely hope I get to since it truly helps me develop and grow as a student. It makes me feel like I'm indeed a Masters student and being productive.

Thank you again for this opportunity!

Poulami Nag, Autumn 2018 and Spring 2019